

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

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|------------------|-------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Serial No.:      | 10/728,322        | : |                            |
|                  |                   | : |                            |
| Filing Date:     | December 4, 2003  | : | <b>TELEPHONE INTERVIEW</b> |
|                  |                   | : | <b>SUMMARY</b>             |
| Art Unit:        | 3627              | : |                            |
|                  |                   | : |                            |
| Examiner:        | Haider            | : |                            |
|                  |                   | : |                            |
| Inventor:        | Baker, et. al     | : |                            |
|                  |                   | : |                            |
| Title:           | SYSTEM AND METHOD | : |                            |
|                  | FOR MANAGING      | : |                            |
|                  | RETURNABLE        | : |                            |
|                  | CONTAINERS        | : |                            |
| Attorney Docket: | HON1448-047       | : |                            |
|                  |                   | : |                            |

Sir:

Pursuant to MPEP 713.04, Applicant is submitting this summary of the substance of the January 10, 2008 telephone interview with Supervisory Patent Examiner Zeender and Patent Examiner Haider.

**REMARKS**

On January 10, 2008 Applicant's representative participated in a telephone interview with Supervisory Patent Examiner Zeender and Patent Examiner Haider to discuss the present application. Applicant's representative appreciated the opportunity to discuss the present application with the Examiners.

Applicant's representative explained that the claimed invention is directed to managing an inventory of returnable containers by allocating containers to suppliers based on a parts demand value related to the manufacturer's production schedule and a container allocated days number related to the number of days that a container remains in a supplier's on-hand inventory. The invention allows a manufacturer to allocate containers to suppliers so that supplies are provided to the manufacturer according to the manufacturer's production schedule. The invention supports efficient allocation of containers to suppliers based on production needs. It reduces the need to maintain a large inventory of containers as well as the risk of a container shortage.

Applicant further explained that in Kawamura, containers are returned by a merchandiser to a supplier at the request of the supplier based on a perceived need evidenced by a number falling below a certain threshold. Containers are not allocated to suppliers; they are simply returned when a return notice is sent from a supplier to a merchandiser. There are no teachings in Kawamura or any of the other cited references related to determining manufacturer production needs or allocating an inventory of containers according to suppliers according to manufacturer's production

needs. No agreement regarding the claims was reached during the telephone interview.

Applicant submitted a response to the office action on January 7, 2008. In the response, the claims were amended to indicate more clearly that the present invention includes features of determining a container allocation quantity based on a parts demand that relates to a manufacturer's production schedule and a number of container allocated days that relates to the number of days a container remains in a supplier's inventory.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: March 11, 2008

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